

**United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service, Science & Technology
Pesticide Data Program**

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Title: Packing and Shipment of Samples		
Revision: 4	Replaces: 06/01/00	Effective: 07/01/02

1. Purpose:

To standardize the packing and shipping procedures utilized by all participating States collecting samples for the USDA/AMS Pesticide Data Program (PDP).

2. Scope:

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) shall be followed by the sample collectors to pack and ship PDP samples to the appropriate laboratory(ies) for analysis.

3. Outline of Procedure:

- 5.1 Packaging Procedures
 - Fresh Commodities
 - Process Commodities
- 5.2 Shipment of PDP Samples

4. References:

- June 18-19, 2002, Sampling Managers Meeting, Manassas, Virginia
- Semi-Annual Program Plan, June-December 2002
- October 30-November 1, 2002, Federal-State Meeting, Seattle, Washington
- April 18-19, 2000 Sampling Managers Meeting, Alexandria, Virginia
- SAMP PROC-5, ACollection, Packaging, and Shipping of Delicate Fresh Fruits and Vegetables@ February 3, 2000
- January 21, 2000, memo; ASample Sizes@
- October 26-28, 1999, Federal/State meeting, Alexandria, VA

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5. Specific Procedures:

5.1 Packing Procedures for Commodities

These packing procedures provide minimum PDP requirements and are presented as general guidelines. Each participating State shall, as part of their internal sampling SOPs, have written procedures which include specific details as to the materials and procedures used for packing the PDP samples. Both the USDA/AMS SOPs and the State's internal SOPs will be used as the measure of compliance during USDA/AMS sampling reviews.

Fresh Commodities

- a. Each sample shall be packed by the sample collector. Samples may be placed in either a plastic or paper bag, but should be sealed in a manner that any attempt to tamper with the contents would be noticed easily. All supplies used for collecting and storing samples must be free of any contaminants which may affect the analytical results. If a State uses plastic bags, it is permissible to place a number of tiny, pin-size holes in the bag for ventilation.
- b. Each official container (bag) shall be labeled to identify the sample with the date, site code, and sample collector's name/initials. Once the sample has been sealed in the official container, it may not be transferred to a different container at a later time.
- c. After the sample(s) has been labeled, it should be placed in an appropriate box or shipping container along with the corresponding Sample Information Form(s) (SIF). However, the SIF(s) should never be placed inside the bag with the sample.
- d. If commodities have been grouped for collection, it is permissible for more than one commodity type to be placed in the same shipping container. However, when packaging more than one fresh commodity type, collectors should attempt to package fresh commodities that have similar temperature and moisture packaging and shipping requirements to minimize product

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degradation. Information regarding temperature and moisture content will be provided in writing to the State Sampling Managers from the USDA/AMS Sampling Manager.

- e. If the shipping container will not change hands, therefore maintaining chain-of-custody, it is not necessary for the container to be sealed. For example, if the collector hand delivers the box to the laboratory.
- f. If only the exact sample amount(s) will be taken from the sampling site, the correct portion may be placed in the official sample container (bag) and sealed by the sample collector prior to exiting the facility. The entire case of product may, in agreement with the warehouse management, be taken to a more convenient location within the facility before removing the sample portion (e.g., area of the warehouse maintained at normal room temperature).
- g. If the entire case of product will be taken from the sampling site, it is permissible for the sample collector to exit the facility prior to removing the sample portion (e.g., taking the case of product to the collector's vehicle).
- h. When collecting and packaging more than one commodity at the same site (or even on the same day), the sample collector shall incorporate a means of preventing cross-contamination among the samples. This may be accomplished by a number of methods such as utilizing disposable gloves, sterile hand wipes, or the washing of hands with soap and water between commodity types. If gloves are used, they must be worn throughout the process of collecting the first sample, carefully discarded afterwards, and replaced by fresh gloves prior to taking the second sample.
- i. The collector should take necessary precautions to prevent samples from being damaged in transit. This may involve stuffing the box with items such as plain paper or Styrofoam chips.
- j. Delicate fresh fruits and vegetables should be packaged and shipped in accordance with SAMP-PROC-5.

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- k. All fresh fruit and vegetable samples should be shipped by a service that results in the sample arriving at the assigned laboratory(ies) the following day.
- l. Sample must not be mailed the day before a Federal holiday or State holiday.
- m. Sample collectors should receive prior approval from the laboratory for samples arriving on Friday.

Processed Commodities

Packaging procedures for processed(canned, frozen, and concentrates) commodities are basically the same as those for fresh commodities, with the exception of the following:

- a. It is not a USDA/AMS requirement that canned samples be placed in a sample container (bag). However, if not, EACH must be clearly labeled for sample identification with the date, site number, and collector's name/initials.
- b. If a State chooses to place canned commodities in a sample container (bag), the container shall be sealed and identified with the date, site number, and collector's name/initials.
- c. Processed products shall be packed in a manner to conserve space, maintain temperature, and to minimize movement of product to avoid rupturing or crushing of containers while in transit.
- d. All containers of the commodity(ies) sampled must have the same packer's code.
- e. The outside of the sample container must be identified with the date, site code, and collector's name/initials.
- f. Frozen samples must be packaged utilizing a method which shall ensure that the samples arrive "cold to the touch" at their destination.

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5.2 Shipment of PDP Samples

- a. If States choose to ship PDP samples in reusable containers (i.e., ice chests, insulated boxes, etc.) the return address should be clearly indicated on the outside of the container with a pre-paid returned shipping label.
- b. Samples may be boxed and prepared for shipment at the collection site, or transported to a local State office or shipping facility for packaging.
- c. All samples must be shipped by a service that results in the sample arriving at the assigned laboratory(ies) no later than the following day, with the exception of canned products. Two-day delivery service is acceptable for canned commodities.
- d. Canned samples will be shipped at ambient temperature.
- e. Frozen samples shall be shipped frozen by the sample collector on the date of collection in a manner that ensures they arrive cold to the touch at the laboratory(ies).
- f. Any additional information regarding shipping of commodities will be provided in writing to State Sampling Managers from the USDA/AMS Sampling Manager.
- g. The sample collector and/or primary State laboratory shall be responsible for ensuring that samples are shipped to the correct laboratory(ies) as provided quarterly on PDP Sample Shipping Assignment charts.
- h. Samples shall be shipped so that they arrive to the laboratory on a weekday.
- i. Do not ship samples on Friday or the day before a Federal or State holiday.
- j. Samplers should receive prior approval from the laboratory for any samples arriving on Friday.

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- k. Delicate fresh fruits and vegetables shall be shipped in accordance with SAMP PROC-5.

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- Spelling and grammatical changes.
- Updated signature page position titles and office name and address
- Updated References
- Updated Effective date.
- Removed paragraphs 5.1(d) and (h) regarding laboratory responsibilities.